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### Cross-Country Wire

**LOS ANGELES** — Moviemakers have had their troubles with "PT 109," the story of JFK's World War II exploits in the Pacific. No fewer than two dozen actors had to be tested for the role of the President (among them: Edd "Kookie" Byrnes of TV's "77 Sunset Strip"). Final choice: 36-year-old Clifford Robertson, TV actor and wartime merchant mariner. JFK gave him the nod last weekend.

**STATE DEPARTMENT** — The U.S. is trying a new wrinkle in international public relations. The idea is to alert the Secretary of State and the White House to any actions by a NATO ally that would give the Administration a chance to hand out public bouquets. State's policy-planning chief, Walt W. Rostow, will be the man who acts on these accolades.

**CHICAGO** — Despite the impasse in the rail "featherbedding" talks here, no coast-to-coast strike will be called by the five operating unions. Neither side wants it, and both are sure Washington would never permit it. The problem now: To find some way to let the unions bargain on the basis of the Federal study of featherbedding—which strongly backed management's arguments (NEWSWEEK, March 12)—without having union leaders lose face.

### Political Pipeline

**GOP NATIONAL HQ** — A clue to how the GOP rates its potential in the South: This fall, the party expects to field more than 60 candidates for Dixie's 106 seats in the House of Representatives.

**SENATE CLOAKROOM** — Usually the soul of New England chivalry, Sen. Leverett Saltonstall is blocking a GOP colleague, Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, from a key post. Mrs. Smith is in line for the second COP seat on the subcommittee that watchdogs the CIA. (Saltonstall is on it now.) The reason for the Massachusetts senator's stand: Mrs. Smith broke ranks to cast one of the two Republican votes against confirming CIA chief John McCone.

**JUSTICE DEPARTMENT** — A key part of Justice's campaign to increase Negro voter registration in the South has been completely behind the scenes. Besides injunctions and other courtroom

tactics, U.S. officials have been quietly using private contacts with local Southern officials to lift bars against Negro voters.

**WHITE HOUSE** — A new entry has been added to the list of possible successors to Abe Ribicoff as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. He is LeRoy Collins, former Democratic governor of Florida and now president of the National Association of Broadcasters.

### Diplomatic Pouch

**NEW DELHI** — A new job for Krishna Menon, India's fiery Defense Minister and sometime U.N. delegate? Despite Menon's sweeping election victory, Prime Minister Nehru is getting pressure from all sides to move him to a less sensitive position. Menon's critics: Army brass (who blame him for India's unreadiness against Red China), Parliament (for the same reason), his own Congress Party (for accepting Communist support), and neutral nations (weary of Menon's penchant for international ceremony).

**ACCRA** — Expect the University of Ghana to name a new professor of music soon—U.S. Negro singer Paul Robeson.

**LISBON** — The Portuguese are working on a new gesture to express their anger at U.S. failure to support them in earnest on Goa and Angola. The ploy: An incredible-sounding trade pact between staunchly anti-Communist Portugal and Red Fidel Castro. The actual trade resulting would be insignificant, but the message would hardly be misunderstood in Washington.

### Behind the News

**UNITED NATIONS** — Eyebrows went up among veterans here when the French took Israel to task in the debate over the border-fighting with Syria. The reason: France has been a major supplier of jet planes and other arms to the Israelis. One theory: With the Algerian war out of the way, France may be moving to regain its once-influential position in the Arab world.

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — When Indonesia and Holland resume their talks about Dutch New Guinea, they'll probably do so on the basis of